

**Department of State**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**(NOFO):** FY 2022 Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative Fellowship Program

**Announcement Type:** New Cooperative Agreement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** SFOP0008550

**Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number:** 19.415

**Application Deadline:** March 25, 2022

**Executive Summary:** The Global Leaders Division in the Office of Citizen Exchanges at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is seeking proposal submissions for one cooperative agreement to design, implement, and oversee the FY 2022 Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLAI) Fellowship Program. Launched in 2015, YLAI is the Department of State's flagship initiative to empower emerging entrepreneurs from the Western Hemisphere to enable the full economic potential of the region's citizens. Combining a yearly fellowship program, an active and open online YLAI Network, and ongoing engagement from U.S. embassies, YLAI fosters prosperity, inclusive development, and democratic values. The YLAI Fellowship Program is a two-way global exchange program designed to promote mutual understanding; empower innovative business and social entrepreneurs to contribute to social and economic development in their communities and countries; and build a lasting and sustainable network of entrepreneurs across Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States. YLAI directly serves U.S. foreign policy objectives as defined by the interim National Security Strategy and Joint Regional Strategy for the Western Hemisphere. For more information about YLAI visit <https://ylai.state.gov/>.

The award recipient will be responsible for planning and administering all components of the YLAI Fellowship Program. The FY 2022 Program will bring approximately 280 participants from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada for a five to six-week Fellowship program including orientation, four to five-week individually tailored working placement in a U.S. business or organization complemented by entrepreneurial training and workshops, an end of program closing event, and follow-on alumni activities. The U.S. outbound exchange component will support approximately 70 U.S. participants traveling overseas for approximately two weeks to assist with implementation of the YLAI Fellows' action plans, follow-on projects, and special initiatives.

It is the Bureau's intent to award one cooperative agreement of up to \$6,600,000, pending the availability of FY 2022 funds. Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will *only* consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

It is the Bureau's intent to award a cooperative agreement of one base year plus two non-competitive continuations. Please see section B.) Federal Award Information, below for additional details.

## A. Program Description:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

The YLAI Fellowship Program supports the following broad goals:

1. Promote mutual understanding and lasting partnerships between business and social entrepreneurs from Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States.
2. Strengthen the entrepreneurial and leadership skills of YLAI Fellows so they can achieve success; grow their businesses or organizations in size, diversity, and impact; and lead positive change in their workplaces, communities, and countries.
3. Provide opportunities before, during, and after the U.S.-based fellowship for the YLAI Fellows and U.S. participants to collaborate and share ideas, approaches, and strategies.
4. Foster business partnerships between emerging entrepreneurial entities in the Western Hemisphere and their counterparts in the United States.
5. Assist the YLAI Fellows in identifying new resources, networks, and support for their businesses or organizations.
6. Create a network of business leaders committed to sound business practices, ethical management, corporate social responsibility, and community involvement.

“Program participants” are defined as those individuals who travel under award funding from their country of origin to a designated exchange country. For this NOFO, program participants are also referred to as “YLAI Fellows” or “Fellows.” Americans participating in follow-on outbound exchanges are referred to as “U.S. Participants.” **Employees and family members of employees of the award recipient or of any sub-award recipients are not eligible to participate in the YLAI Fellowship Program and cannot be included as program participants.**

### A1. Eligible Countries

Fellows will be business or social entrepreneurs, age 25-35, recruited and selected from eligible countries in the Western Hemisphere: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti,

Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela. ECA reserves the right to modify the final list of participating countries and the allocation of participant numbers by country in the FY 2022 cooperative agreement and up to two subsequent Non-Competitive Continuations.

## **A2. Outreach and Program Promotion**

The proposal must include an outline to describe how the YLAI Fellowship Program will be publicized to various audiences and media outlets, including print, online, and broadcast, to reach the widest possible audience of qualified applicants, potential U.S. host institutions, and other relevant audiences. The proposal must also include a community outreach plan to educate Americans on the YLAI Fellowship Program, particularly those who will interact with Fellows during the program. Outreach should include print and virtual content.

Additionally, the proposal should address the recipient's ability to support maintenance of the YLAI Fellowship Program website and all its components and social media sites. The award recipient must regularly check the website content to ensure that all posted material is current and correct and must submit any new strategies for presenting program information or major revisions of current online materials to ECA in advance for approval. ECA may request that website content be added or removed in a timely manner. On occasion, ECA may request that the recipient assist in promoting and coordinating opportunities for Fellowship Alumni with the YLAI Network. Once an award is issued, the recipient should develop a comprehensive outreach plan designed to raise public awareness of the YLAI Fellowship Program and to demonstrate inclusiveness, innovations, and the U.S. and international impact of the program.

All print and online materials provided to or created for dissemination to applicants, participants, program partners, U.S. government agencies, including U.S. embassies and consulates, and other entities must adhere to ECA communication guidelines and be submitted for ECA review and approval prior to distribution. The proposal should emphasize ways in which technology will facilitate communication among Fellows and their fellowship placement organizations before, during, and after the fellowship placement, as well as strengthen group identity and facilitate follow-on projects and alumni activities.

## **A3. Recruitment and Selection**

Proposals must demonstrate the capacity for the recipient to conduct a recruitment and selection process for foreign Fellows, fellowship placement organizations, and U.S. participants. The recipient will be responsible for developing creative and comprehensive plans for the recruitment of applicants through an open competition for all YLAI Fellowship Program opportunities. The recruitment plans should make clear the primary purpose and audience for key messages, making sure to differentiate between recruitment and general program marketing and promotion. The recruitment plans should include the development of marketing materials including, but not limited to, print materials (flyers, fact sheets, one pagers, brochures); prerecorded content (radio

advertisements, podcasts, etc.); online content (website information, social media campaigns); and outreach to potential U.S. hosts, sectors related to Fellows' professional backgrounds, and other relevant stakeholders. Successful recruitment plans will provide specific strategies for attracting well-qualified and diverse pools of applicants, as well as the ability to translate materials into other languages such as Spanish and Portuguese. All aspects of diversity included in ECA's Diversity Statement should be addressed in the recruitment plans including, where applicable, institutional, geographic, racial, gender, ethnic, age, religious, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

The award recipient must develop an online program announcement and program application that eligible applicants can access and submit online. The online application should include an "opt-in" function allowing applicants to register their willingness to receive content and participate in online activities from the U.S. Department of State's YLAI Network. Additionally, the recipient is responsible for developing and managing a viable recruitment, selection, and placement plan that allows for U.S. Department of State involvement. U.S. embassies and consulates and other U.S. government agencies throughout the Western Hemisphere will play a significant role in recruitment and selection. Proposals should include information about how the recipient plans to collaborate with posts in recruitment efforts.

### **Fellows**

Fellows must be selected through an open, merit-based, competitive process in consultation with ECA, U.S. Department of State Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA), and the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the respective U.S. embassies and consulates ("posts") in relevant Western Hemisphere countries. While PAS will be involved in participant selection and should interview candidates from a slate of eligible Fellows, full responsibility for recruitment coordination and implementation lies with the award recipient.

Proposals must demonstrate how a diverse cohort of Fellows will be recruited, including minorities and marginalized populations and individuals with disabilities. See reasonable accommodations section under allowable costs section for more information on individuals with disabilities. Special attention should be made to the recruitment and selection of women entrepreneurs.

At a minimum participant selection criteria for Fellows must include the following:

- Citizen of eligible country; see A.1. Eligible Countries;
- Business or social entrepreneur, 25 to 35 years old, with a demonstrated track record of at least two years of experience successfully managing an entrepreneurial venture in their home countries. "Business entrepreneur" is defined as a person who has successfully started his or her own for-profit business and has successfully maintained the business for at least two years. "Social entrepreneur" is defined as an individual who has successfully implemented an innovative solution to a pressing social challenge employing a job-

creating and/or revenue-generating business model and successfully maintained the organization for at least two years. Such social enterprises can be for-profit or non-profit.

- Demonstrated commitment to develop, enhance, or lead an existing venture. During the application process, successful candidates must provide a well-articulated action plan they will work to refine and for which they will seek support during their fellowships.
- Demonstrated viability of their current ventures through indicators such as: investment to date; current or planned number of employees; profits; social impact analysis; and an overall track record of achievement in the field.
- Preference will be given to candidates who have not previously participated in U.S. Government programs or spent significant amounts of time in the United States.
- Self-directed and able to work effectively in a cross-cultural setting. Committed to principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Demonstrated proficiency in both written and oral English. Participants must have “working-level knowledge of English” that has been verified by the award recipient.

### **U.S. Participants**

The award recipient will select approximately 70 U.S. participants in an open, merit-based, competitive process in consultation with ECA to travel to Western Hemisphere countries in support of YLAI Fellows. U.S. participants must be U.S. citizens primarily selected from those individuals who served as placement hosts for the Fellows at the fellowship placement organizations and who had significant engagement with the Fellow during the U.S.-based program. Selected U.S. participants should also have expertise and experience to support YLAI Fellows’ Action Plans, follow-on projects, special initiatives, and community engagement activities.

### **A.4. Program Components**

The award recipient will be responsible for planning and administering all components and aspects of the YLAI Fellowship Program. The program should offer a dynamic and substantive professional mentorship experience to entrepreneurs from the Western Hemisphere seeking to scale an existing business or social venture in their home countries. Fellows will be given access to a network of professionals, mentors, and resources aligned to support the growth of their business venture during the program. By exploring entrepreneurship through a regional context, Fellows will develop the expertise to better engage in policy conversations in their home countries, across the hemisphere, and in the international sphere.

### **The YLAI Fellowship Program Must Include:**

1. Pre-departure orientation (PDO) in the Fellows’ home countries before traveling to the United States;
2. Online community;

3. An arrival orientation to launch the program for all YLAI Fellows;
4. A substantive four to five-week individually tailored U.S. fellowship placement;
5. Support for each Fellow in developing an action plan to implement in their home country;
6. Supplemental entrepreneurship and leadership training, workshops, site visits, networking, and peer learning activities;
7. Upon conclusion of the four to five-week fellowship placement, a YLAI Closing Forum for all Fellows in Washington, D.C.;
8. Reciprocal exchange;
9. Networking and follow-on alumni activities;

Every effort should be made for the Fellows to engage with a diverse, wide range of U.S. citizens regarding their work and their home country, such as through community/school presentations, business networking events, media interviews, etc. Proposals must demonstrate the ability to implement all major components of the YLAI Fellowship Program. Details on the various components can be found in the relevant sections below.

Proposals must also demonstrate subject matter expertise on the Western Hemisphere and in the thematic areas listed below. Applicant organizations without an existing organizational presence in the target countries must identify an overseas partner (“in-country partner”) with whom they propose to collaborate. ECA and participating Public Affairs Sections at U.S. embassies and consulates reserve the right to approve in-country partners. In addition, proposals must demonstrate capacity to secure effective and appropriate fellowship placements for the Fellows in the United States.

#### **A.4.1. Pre-Departure Orientation**

Fellows must participate in a pre-departure orientation (PDO) prior to their departure from their home country, and U.S. participants must participate in a PDO prior to their departure from the United States. PDOs can take place either virtually or in person. The PDO should give Fellows and U.S. participants an overview of the YLAI Fellowship Program, overarching goals, expectations of the exchange experience, cultural, logistical, and health and safety information, along with any additional resources that would assist in their preparations for departure. The PDO will also establish a strong relationship between YLAI fellows and U.S. embassies and strengthen the YLAI fellow and alumni network in each country.

In coordination with ECA, the award recipient will be responsible for developing and administering all PDOs. PDOs should be interactive, and when possible, engage posts, ECA, in-country partners, and alumni of the program. In coordination with ECA, the award recipient will develop PDO resource materials, and schedule and host PDOs. PDOs should, when possible, be held in conjunction with U.S. embassy group visa interviews/briefings.

At minimum, all PDOs for Fellows should include:

- Overview of the YLAI Fellows Program including program goals and objectives and goals of the Fulbright-Hays Act;
- Overview of the U.S. State Department role in supporting international exchanges;
- U.S. government policy priorities;
- Overview of Fellow action plan process;
- Expectations about the fellowship placement;
- Discussion on cross-cultural issues, including day-to-day considerations of living and working in the United States, ECA guidance on sexual harassment, and U.S. business standards and expectations regarding professional conduct;
- Overview of the closing event in Washington, D.C.;
- Overview of J-1 visa regulations (including two-year home residency requirement);
- Overview of the Accident and Sickness program for Exchanges (ASPE), particularly what is covered and not covered. More information on ASPE can be found at [www.sevencorners/usdos](http://www.sevencorners/usdos);
- Travel logistics;
- Opportunities for alumni and network engagement;
- Social media toolkit and overview of social media engagement; and

At minimum, all PDOs for U.S. Participants should include:

- Overview of the YLAI Fellows Program including program goals and objectives and goals of the Fulbright-Hays Act;
- Overview of the U.S. State Department role in supporting international exchanges;
- U.S. government policy priorities;
- Expectations of the Reciprocal Exchange component;
- Discussion on cross-cultural issues including day-to-day considerations of living and working in the host country and professional standards of conduct;
- Instructions for registering with the local U.S. embassy or consulate using the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP);
- Overview of ASPE, particularly what is covered and not covered;
- Travel logistics;
- Opportunities for alumni and network engagement;
- Social media toolkit and overview of social media engagement; and
- Opportunities to engage with the U.S. Department of State and tell the exchange story.

Proposals should include sample PDO materials.

#### **A.4.2 Online Community:**



Proposals must demonstrate the applicants' ability to develop a robust online community that will have four main functions: (1) link all the YLAI Fellows and their host organizations together virtually throughout their stay in the United States and afterwards; (2) supplement the fellowship placement and workshops and serve as an additional source of information on how to be a successful entrepreneur, supplementing the professional placement and the workshops; (3) provide the Fellows with a platform to showcase their follow-on projects and initiatives; and (4) serve as a source of content for YLAI success stories that can be used in reporting and recruitment. The online platform used to develop this community must be mobile responsive.

#### **A.4.3. Arrival Orientation**

All Fellows must participate in an arrival orientation in the United States. The award recipient will be responsible for developing a template presentation and other relevant orientation materials to ensure consistency of common program information, in coordination with ECA. Arrival orientation materials should be designed to give Fellows more specifics about the U.S.-based program and U.S. participants specifics about their Reciprocal Exchange. Proposals should explain how the orientation will work to reinforce and build on key messages presented at the PDO.

At a minimum the arrival orientation materials for the Fellow must include:

- Overview of primary points of contact;
- Reminder of expectations (including review of Terms and Conditions);
- Details of U.S. fellowship (review of schedule of activities, including program activities and deadlines);
- Fellowship placement-specific policies and regulations;
- Details on supplemental entrepreneurship sessions;
- Discussion of Fellow action plans;
- Discussion of health and safety (ASPE, emergency contacts, location of nearest clinic/hospital, relevant state laws, ECA guidance on sexual harassment, etc.);
- Overview of the host state and city (including historical landmarks, closest grocery store and pharmacy, closest houses of worship, etc.);
- Discussion on culture, diversity, and respect (including professionalism and sexual harassment);
- Networking and ways to maximize experience;
- Communications guidance;
- Overview of the YLAI Fellows alumni network; and
- Overview of the closing event in Washington, D.C.



The award recipient should coordinate with post to schedule an arrival orientation for U.S. Participants, in consultation with ECA. U.S. participants and their counterparts should have every opportunity to engage with the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. embassy or consulate in the host country. Where possible, additional arrangements should be made for a security briefing with the U.S. Embassy's Regional Security Office (RSO). Minimally, once the U.S. Participant arrives in their host country the Fellow(s) who is/are hosting the American participant should provide him/her with a general overview of the host country and the plans for the exchange. The award recipient will be responsible for creating an outline of a guidance document/talking points that the Fellow(s) can use to orient the American participant to their home country. These documents must be submitted to ECA for approval before dissemination to the Fellow(s). At a minimum the document should include:

- Overview of host country;
- Discussion of health and safety (safety of food and water, where to avoid, who to contact in case of an emergency, etc.);
- Cultural norms;
- Overview of Reciprocal Exchange (review of schedule of activities); and
- Review of Fellow(s) action plan (discussion of goals and expectations)

#### **A.4.4. U.S. Fellowship Placements**

The award recipient and/or sub-award recipients must secure, at least one month in advance of the YLAI Fellows arriving in the United States, a substantive fellowship placement tailored to the individual Fellow's professional goals. Placements must be a minimum of four weeks in length. The purpose of the placement is to provide YLAI Fellows with a professional development program that includes direct experience with the day-to-day workings of a U.S. workplace, the opportunity to develop professional relationships with U.S. counterparts, and support in developing a concrete Action Plan that Fellows can implement in their home countries. The U.S. Department of State requires one placement for the entire fellowship period (rather than multiple, short-term placements with different U.S. organizations). Depending on the size of the host organization, up to two Fellows may be placed at one host organization. Proposals should include a clear plan for how the award recipient and/or sub-award recipients will recruit and select U.S. fellowship placement businesses and organizations.

"Fellowship placement" refers to the program component where the Fellow is working in a U.S. business or organization relevant to his or her professional experience and interest. Fellowship placements are individually tailored and must be for a minimum of four weeks, minimum four days a week, approximately 32 hours per week. The fifth day or the remainder of the time should be used for opportunities for the Fellows to work on other professional activities such as entrepreneurship curriculum training, site visits and networking or mentoring meetings.

Host placement organizations may include start-ups, incubators or accelerators, established small or medium-sized enterprises, small business groups, associations or – for the social entrepreneurs – non-profit organizations, social enterprises, or local government offices. Every effort should be made to ensure Fellows are exposed to core values of U.S. businesses and social enterprises such as corporate and social responsibility, business ethics, and volunteerism. The fellowship placements should be thoughtfully chosen to provide participants with experience, networks, and resources to strengthen their entrepreneurial mindset, business skills, and opportunities for developing sustainable projects and building professional relationships with U.S. counterparts.

The fellowship placement should be mutually beneficial to the Fellow and the placement organization. The fellowship placement must provide a substantive experience for the Fellow. Fellowship placements must be developed in accordance with the Fellow's and the U.S. placement host's professional needs, and the Fellow's follow-on project in his/her home country. The placements should provide the Fellows with: 1) direct experience with the day-to-day workings of a U.S. workplace; 2) the opportunity to network and form professional relationships with U.S. colleagues; and 3) help for the Fellows as they develop their action plans to carry-out their follow-on projects.

To ensure that each Fellow has a substantive professional experience and a primary point of contact throughout the placement, each fellowship placement organization must designate at least one person within their organization, who understands the goals and objectives of YLAI, to serve as a host for the Fellow throughout the duration of the four-week placement.

Proposals should include how the award recipient will recruit and select appropriate U.S. placement host organizations. Proposals must demonstrate the ability to secure fellowship placements by including letters of commitment from potential U.S. placement host organizations. All Fellows will be grouped together in teams, according to their business industry and areas of professional interest, in approximately 20 cities across the United States. This organization will foster cohesiveness among the Fellows, allow maximum opportunities to network, build a broader group identity, and achieve consistency in the fellowship experience. Each team will be placed in a U.S. city that has an established or emerging entrepreneurship ecosystem with strong, relevant resources for the group's area of focus (a technology-focused cohort will be placed in a high-tech center, etc.). City cohorts may be administered by the awardee or by sub-award recipients. City cohorts can be led by a business incubator, university, or other appropriate organization or individuals.

#### **A.4.5. Action Plans**

U.S. placement hosts should be willing and able to assist Fellows in developing concrete action plans for scaling up their own businesses or social ventures. Proposals should describe how the award recipient will work with each Fellow and his/her U.S. placement host on the development of the Fellows' action plan and on implementation of the action plan after the Fellow returns to his/her home country.

The action plan should support the Fellows' professional growth throughout all stages of the program and as an alumnus. Proposals should include a plan to ensure a consistent timeline for the Fellows to develop an initial action plan and work to refine the action plan during the U.S. fellowship. Proposals should include creative and thoughtful ways to incorporate the sharing of action plans into the closing program. The award recipient will be responsible for developing an action plan template that will be used by the Fellows.

#### **A.4.6. Supplemental Entrepreneurship and Leadership Training**

All members of the city teams must come together during the four-week fellowship placement for supplemental workshops, panel discussions or sites visits focused on entrepreneurial and leadership skills. Workshops must provide participants with opportunities to network with each other and U.S. business leaders and social entrepreneurs. Workshops should address cross-cultural adjustment issues and offer practical training that will help Fellows complete their action plans and achieve their individual entrepreneurial goals. Sessions must also provide participants with mentorship opportunities with business leaders in their fields of interest. The workshops for all the city teams must be shaped by a single entrepreneurship curriculum to ensure consistency of experience for all Fellows. All the workshops should be designed for experienced business and social entrepreneurs with a record of success and placed within the appropriate cultural context. Content should not be too basic or theoretical as to be irrelevant to the Fellows.

#### **Topics for entrepreneurial trainings and workshops might include:**

- Strategic planning; vision and goal setting;
- Pitching business ideas;
- Redefining business plans or canvas;
- Product development and innovation management;
- Teamwork, networking and negotiating skills;
- Website development, social media, e-commerce, digital sales and digital marketing;
- Digitalization and use of new technologies;
- Market research, sales, and marketing;
- Business growth and scaling;
- Building an online brand;
- Financial literacy including accountancy, bookkeeping, data analysis, investment methods and calculating risks;
- Access to finance and funding through venture capitalists, crowdfunding, and angel investors;
- Noncommercial financing;
- Linking to international supply chains;
- International law, trading regulation, export documentation, intellectual property rights;
- Support for women entrepreneurs, including how to address barriers women face and specialized gender training for staff and participants;

- Accountability, transparency, and ethics;
- Innovation in a time of crisis;
- Corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship, and
- Building and sustaining diverse and inclusive businesses.

#### **A.4.7. YLAI Closing Forum**

The award recipient will be responsible for planning and implementing a YLAI Closing Forum in Washington, D.C. at the end of the U.S. Fellowship placements. All Fellows will convene to share lessons learned, deepen connections with one another, and meet U.S. leaders from the private, public, and non-profit sectors. The Forum is also an opportunity for cohort leaders (which could be sub-award recipients) to exchange best practices and ideas for future programming. Cohort leaders will participate in a debriefing session with ECA program staff.

The Closing Forum will occur over the course of three to four days and should include the following aspects:

1. Interaction among Fellows and senior U.S. government officials, business and civic leaders, and members of the diplomatic community;
2. Opportunities for Fellows to interact and share their work and experiences with each other, both formally and informally;
3. Inspirational speeches from distinguished American leaders and/or other prominent leaders;
4. Opportunities for Fellows to showcase their Action Plans and attract support and resources for their business or organization;
5. Workshops and seminars that further complement and reinforce the entrepreneurship and leadership concepts explored during the program;
6. Information sharing on alumni and follow-on activities, including the YLAI Network; and
7. A post-program survey.

#### **A.4.8. Reciprocal Exchange for Americans**

The award recipient will administer, coordinate, and support one to two-week reciprocal exchanges (minimum of five business days) that enable U.S. participants to travel to foreign countries to support Fellows' follow-on projects; offer skills development sessions and workshops for a broader range of local participants; and promote the YLAI Fellowship Program for future participants. Participants will be selected in an open, merit-based, competitive process in consultation with ECA. U.S. participants will be selected from those individuals who served as placement hosts to the Fellows at the U.S. fellowship placement organizations and who had significant engagement with the Fellow placed in their organization during the U.S. fellowship period. Americans should apply collaboratively with the Fellow they hosted. The Fellow should be deeply involved in the development of the reciprocal exchange phase of the program,

including the conceptualization, scheduling, and implementation of the program. Reciprocal exchange proposals that involve programming conceived in collaboration with the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate will be given priority. U.S. participants must have experience pertaining to the Fellows' individual follow-on projects, in order to assist the Fellows in meeting their action plan goals.

**The Reciprocal Exchange for U.S. Participants, at a minimum must:**

- Be substantive in nature. Applications for the Reciprocal Exchange program must contain a draft schedule of proposed activities, meetings, and/or trainings that cover the duration of the exchange;
- Build on the U.S. fellowship component and support the Fellows' individual action plans and/or follow-on projects;
- Provide direct opportunities for the U.S. participants to implement joint programming with the Fellows and their colleagues; and
- Support U.S. foreign policy objectives and advance the goal of building sustainable and lasting professional partnerships.

Proposals should include a sample application, a timeline, and describe the selection process for the U.S. outbound components. The award recipient will prepare for ECA and the relevant U.S. Embassies/Consulates review a proposed slate of American participants with summary information including biographical data of participants, proposed destination cities, a draft agenda, and clear timeline for each project. The selection process must allow ample time for ECA and the U.S. Embassies/Consulates to review and approve U.S. Participants.

**A.4.9. YLAI Alumni Programming**

Building and maintaining connections among Fellows across the Western Hemisphere before, during, and after the program is a critical part of the program's success. Proposals should include plans to create and maintain an engaged network of alumni, program participants, and program hosts. The YLAI Fellowship Program should advance alumni's professional development goals and interests and the Department of State's public diplomacy objectives.

The award recipient should facilitate communication among Fellows and their fellowship placement organizations before, during, and after the fellowship placement; strengthen group identity; and facilitate follow-on/alumni activities. Content should be easily accessible via mobile app and/or a mobile-friendly web platform. The platform should have a space for alumni and participants to collaborate on projects. The award recipient must connect all previous YLAI alumni (approximately 1,000) to new program participants and alumni. Special administrative access to the online platform should be granted to ECA, potential sub-awardees (if applicable), and other program stakeholders, in consultation with ECA.

Alumni programming should be incorporated into and build upon the YLAI Fellowship Program online platform. Alumni activities for the YLAI Fellowship Program should address ECA alumni program goals that foster:

- U.S. diplomatic mission engagement with exchange alumni;
- Alumni implementation and teaching of the concepts they explored during their exchange programs; and
- On-going communication and collaboration with U.S. professional contacts established while the Fellows were on the program.

Alumni programming should be tailored to meet the needs of a diverse and highly motivated network of program alumni (Fellows and U.S. participants). Activities can be virtual, in-person, or hybrid and must allow alumni to: 1) share their knowledge with broader communities; 2) enhance leadership skills; 3) expand networking opportunities; 4) engage in community service; 5) expand the multiplier effect in home institutions or communities; and 6) engage in continued professional development.

Proposals may include ideas to develop a mentoring component, offer small grants, and provide creative ways to showcase the work of program alumni at all stages of the YLAI Fellowship Program, including at the closing event in Washington, D.C. Programming should creatively respond to the needs of the YLAI Fellowship Program participants and alumni, adhere to research on adult learning, be inclusive in nature, and accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities.

The award recipient will create and maintain an alumni database to track all alumni across the YLAI Fellowship Program. The award recipient will work in close coordination with ECA to transfer previous alumni data and new data collected as part of the FY 2022 and subsequent renewal years. The database must be accessible to ECA and include biographical information on program participants and alumni. The program database should include functionality that allows for tracking success stories and provide statistical reports by country, theme, and year. The database must include search functionality that allows ECA to search by participant name, fellowship placement name, year, keywords, and other search criteria. The award recipient will report to ECA on outcomes and effectiveness related to all alumni activities; coordinate with ECA on alumni surveys throughout the period of the cooperative agreement; and provide information on aggregate data and outcomes of any surveys.

Alumni programming should also provide opportunities to support the long-term results of the YLAI Fellowship Program. Proposals must demonstrate award recipient's ability to track all alumni activities, leverage resources, and, where possible, connect various initiatives.

The award recipient should also incorporate ECA alumni initiatives into their plans and communications for alumni programming, including, but not limited to, the online community on the International Exchange Alumni website ([alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov)) and other exchange alumni opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of State such as small grants and professional

development seminars. It is important that all alumni programs continue to strengthen a sense of identity with the U.S. government. As such, the applicants should follow ECA communications guidance for crediting the U.S. Department of State.

Proposals should include concrete plans for sustainable engagement between Fellows and host businesses and organizations after the U.S. fellowship ends. Proposals should clearly articulate how the award recipient will track and provide ECA with regular updates on successful business and social outcomes resulting from the YLAI Fellowship Program. The proposal should also include a defined strategy for alumni engagement with the Fellows that supports U.S. foreign policy goals. The proposal must include:

1. An outline of proposed activities for alumni engagement;
2. Strategies to connect new alumni with alumni from previous years professionally, nationally, and regionally; and
3. A description of how long-term linkages within the alumni community will be encouraged, coordinated, and integrated into existing State Department initiatives.

## **A.5. Key Administrative Elements**

### **1) Visas for Entry into the United States and Foreign Countries**

To procure U.S. visas for the foreign Fellows, the primary award recipient will work with ECA and PAS at the respective U.S. Embassy. The award recipient will need to collect and submit to ECA all required biographical information on the YLAI Professional Fellows that is necessary to complete the DS-2019 form required for their J-1 visas. To procure foreign visas for the U.S. participants, if necessary, the primary award recipient will work directly with the respective foreign embassy in the United States.

### **2) International Air Travel**

The award recipient must comply with all federal regulations regarding the use of U.S. government funds including the Fly America Act. These regulations apply to both U.S. and foreign travelers.

### **3) Projected Program Timeline**

ECA envisions the YLAI Fellowship Program for Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada as follows:

August – September 2022	Application period for YLAI Fellows
October 2022	Initial review of applications



November 2022	Interviews conducted
December 2022	Announcement of selected participants and alternates
January – May 2023	DS-2019s issued, visa interviews
March to May 2023	Virtual YLAI Fellowship programming
June 2023	YLAI Fellows arrive to the United States
July 2023	Closing Forum in Washington, D.C.
September 2023	U.S. outbound exchanges begin

#### **A6. Recipient Responsibilities:**

The responsibilities of the recipient organization will include but are not limited to the following:

1. In close collaboration with ECA, design, plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate a two-way international exchange program for approximately 70 American participants and 280 YLAI Professional Fellows, young business and social entrepreneurs from the Western Hemisphere region (Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela), that will strengthen the participants' entrepreneurial and leadership skills and provide them with opportunities to network and collaborate. ECA reserves the right to add, decrease or modify the specific countries, based on the availability of funds and other factors.
2. Provide a plan that defines the nature and extent of services required by any sub-award recipient(s). Note: The primary award recipient is responsible for ensuring the compliance of all sub-award recipients in meeting the requirements of the cooperative agreement.
3. Include potential sub-award recipients in the original proposal and provide a letter of intent from each.
4. In collaboration with ECA, organize a workshop(s) for sub-award recipients/cohort leaders to discuss program objectives, roles and responsibilities, guidance on fellowship placements, entrepreneurship and leadership training, and other activities to ensure consistency and quality across all host cities. ECA must approve workshop content in advance and be invited to participate in all workshops.

5. Develop a robust recruitment strategy that targets a diverse group of eligible individuals and adheres to ECA's goals for a merit-based open competition.
6. Identify or develop a web-based platform that can seamlessly collect and share applicant information with ECA.
7. Develop a transparent review process to assess candidate applications. The award recipient will work closely with ECA on the development and implementation of review criteria and keep ECA informed about its application and assessment process.
8. In coordination with U.S. Embassies and Consulates, arrange in-person or virtual English language interviews for semi-finalists during the second round of the selection process.
9. In coordination with U.S. Embassies and Consulates, conduct pre-departure orientations (virtual or otherwise) for finalists in home countries, answering their questions on programmatic issues, including, but not limited to, Fellowship placements, program responsibilities and expectations, travel, accident and sickness benefits, housing, etc.
10. Use virtual technology and other outreach tools to facilitate communication among newly selected finalists and host organizations prior to their arrival in the United States, including the sharing of orientation material, program and community resources, and pre-program assignments.
11. Create programmatic guidelines and materials for U.S. host businesses and organizations. The award recipient should provide a virtual orientation for U.S. host institutions that clearly outlines hosting roles and responsibilities.
12. Issue participant DS-2019 forms and ship to the applicable embassies or consulates for all international participants and alternates. All international participants will travel on a U.S. government designation for the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor program.
13. Enroll participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program, issue health benefits identifications cards, and assist with claims as necessary. More information on ASPE is available at <https://www.sevencorners.com/gov/usdos>.
14. Provide reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities who may be selected for participation in the program as Fellows or as U.S. Participants.
15. Arrange round-trip travel for Fellows from their home cities to the United States.
16. Arrange all international and domestic travel and local transportation for all Fellows and U.S. participants.
17. Develop a standardized (common) entrepreneurship curriculum and organize entrepreneurial training for all YLAI Fellows.
18. Monitor participants and the performance of host institutions for the duration of the Fellowship.
19. Work closely with foreign Fellows in the design and implementation of U.S. Participants' outbound travel program.
20. In close coordination with ECA, design, plan, implement, and evaluate the YLAI Closing Forum to be held in Washington, D.C. for approximately 400 people, including all 280 YLAI Fellows, one representative for each cohort, grantee staff, speakers, facilitators, DOS and other invited guests.
21. Monitor and evaluate the YLAI Fellowship Program and its impact on Fellows and U.S. Participants during their fellowship program and after they return to their home countries.

M&E plans should include how the award recipient will capture results of the MODE indicators (see section D.10 below) and foreign Fellows' Action Plans and how and when those results will be reported to ECA and to work closely with the program office and ECA's Monitoring Evaluation Learning and Innovation (MELI) Unit to assure coordination of M&E efforts as much as possible so as not to over-burden participants with redundant or overlapping survey instruments/questions.

22. Consult closely with ECA on developing a comprehensive outreach strategy for highlighting foreign Fellow achievements while in the United States and after their return home and the program impact on U.S. participants, including through the use of online and other social media platforms.
23. Manage financial aspects of the program (including timely disbursement of participant stipends, housing allowances, accident and sickness benefits, hosting agreements, and other activity costs) and promptly report any irregularities in the budget or spending to ECA.
24. Submit a travel plan to ECA for approval for all proposed domestic and international travel of award recipient staff and sub-award recipients.
25. Participate in regular meetings with ECA (in person, by telephone, or video conference) to identify any programmatic and/or budgetary matters of concern.
26. Provide monthly programmatic, financial, and statistical information to ECA outlining general programmatic activities conducted and policy impact during the previous month and anticipated programmatic activities to be conducted and policy impact in the coming month.
27. Respond fully and promptly to ad hoc requests for program information from ECA.
28. Ensure compliance with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement with ECA, including, but not limited to, submitting timely financial and program reports and proper budget oversight.
29. Develop a post-program support plan to provide ongoing support (networking, mentorship) to Fellows for the year following the completion of their YLAI Fellowship Program.

#### **A7. Substantial Involvement:**

In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. **ECA's Global Leaders Division's** activities and responsibilities for this program are as follows:

1. Participate and provide guidance in the design, direction, and execution of all program components and activities.
2. Approve key personnel and any changes that are made to dedicated YLAI staff.
3. Approve and provide input on recruitment materials, applications, program timelines and agendas.
4. Approve sub-award recipients, partner organizations, and fellowship placements.
5. Approve the final selection of all Fellows and U.S. Participants.

6. Approve decisions related to special circumstances or problems throughout the duration of the program, including assisting with participant emergencies.
7. Liaise with WHA, Public Affairs Section staff at U.S. embassies and consulates, country desk officers, and other offices at the State Department particularly in terms of recruitment, selection, web-based publicity efforts, and opening and closing events.
8. Work with award recipient to publicize the program through various media outlets (such as the social media platforms of ECA and PAS), including approving all program publicity, outreach efforts, and other materials in accordance with Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients.
9. Assist in the coordination of the Closing Forum in Washington, D.C. including arranging meetings with key stakeholders within the U.S. Department of State.
10. Monitor and evaluate the program through regular communication with the award recipient, meetings, site visits, and debriefing sessions; and liaise with ECA's MELI Unit and the award recipient.

#### **A8. Non-Competitive Continuations:**

Proposal narratives should include a commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuations, pending successful performance and the availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration, and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two non-competitive continuations are exercised. ECA will perform an annual performance evaluation/review to determine if a non-competitive continuation will be exercised. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all non-competitive continuations.

#### **B. Federal Award Information:**

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A1. Substantial Involvement under A. Program Description.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2022 base year, up to \$6,600,000, pending the availability of funds; FY 2023 Non-Competitive Continuation year one, up to \$6,600,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds; FY 2024 Non-Competitive Continuation year two, up to \$6,600,000; pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$19,800,000. This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

**Approximate Number of Awards:** One.

**Approximate Average Award:** \$6,600,000, pending the availability of funds.

**Floor of Award Range:** \$6,600,000, pending the availability of funds.

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$6,600,000, pending the availability of funds.

**Anticipated Award Date:** June 1, 2022.

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** November 30, 2026. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.

Additional Information: The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

A Cooperative Agreement will be awarded for a period of 18 months (base year) with Non-Competitive Continuations for two additional 18-month periods (non-competitive continuation years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of its intention to exercise or not to exercise a Non-Competitive Continuation at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise a Non-Competitive Continuation will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

### **C. Eligibility Information:**

**C.1. Eligible applicants:** U.S. public and private academic and cultural institutions, exchange-of-persons, and other not-for-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit applications for this competition. Applicants must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please see the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional information.

All applicants must also have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and be registered in SAM.gov (see additional information about this requirement in D.3. and D.5. below).

**C.2. Other Eligibility Requirements:** The following additional eligibility requirements apply to this NOFO announcement:

- a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one cooperative agreement, in an amount of \$6,600,000 to support all costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.
- b.) All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.
- c.) Only *one* proposal will be considered by ECA from each applicant organization. In cases where more than one submission from an applicant appears in grants.gov, ECA will *only* consider the submission made closest in time to the NOFO deadline; that submission would constitute the one and only proposal ECA would review from that applicant.

**Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

**C.3. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds:** There is no minimum or maximum percentage of cost sharing required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution may be reduced in like proportion.

#### **D. Application and Submission Information:**

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

**D.1. Solicitation Package Location:** The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov>.

**D.2. Content and Form of Submission:** Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package, including the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.18. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

**D.3. Unique Entity Identifier Number:** You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI



(DUNS) number, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

**D.4. Required Proposal Elements:** All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget, and budget narrative.

**D.5. Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM):** All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain a current registration in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) until all program and financial activity and reporting is completed on any issued award. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

**D.6. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS):** Prior to making a Federal Assistance award over \$250,000, the Federal agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313) and accessible through SAM.gov. If an Applicant is currently in FAPIIS, they can comment on any information about its organization that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

**D.7. Required Registration with SAMS Domestic:** All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing <https://mygrants.servicenowservices.com> and clicking the "create an account" link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.



Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at <https://afsism.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact [ECA\\_SAMSDomestic@state.gov](mailto:ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov) and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

**D.8. Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa:** The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division  
U.S. Department of State  
SA-4E (Bldg. 3)  
2430 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

**D.9. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Freedom and Democracy**

**Guidelines:** Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic origin, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity, equity, and inclusion will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities. Programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. Please refer to the "Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" review criterion of this

document for more information on how this will be reviewed as a part of any application. Please also refer to the “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” section in the “Proposal Submission Instructions” document for specific suggestions on incorporating DEI into the proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

**D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** A performance monitoring framework is vital to tracking the performance and the direction, pace, and magnitude of change that result from ECA programs. This section pertains to performance monitoring in particular – as this type of monitoring is distinct from grants monitoring or other program monitoring discussed elsewhere in this solicitation. Performance monitoring is designed to assess progress against established goals and objectives across the Bureau and as established for each award.

The Bureau recommends the use of a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) to establish your performance monitoring plans for each award. The PMP is an important part of any proposal, as it outlines how the applicant plans to track progress towards the proposed program’s goals and objectives through indicators and corresponding data collection questions. These corresponding data collection questions help ensure that the data is being collected in a uniform way across the entire Bureau.

For this proposal and the resulting cooperative agreement(s)/grant(s), the Bureau recommends the applicant include the programmatic objectives and indicators listed below:

Objective 1: Advance Participant and Beneficiary Cross-Cultural Competence and Global Perspective

- Sub-Objective 1.1: Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities
  - E1.1.04: Percent of participants with more favorable opinions of the United States Government
  - E1.1.09: Percent of participants who traveled abroad for the first time because of their program
  - E1.1.10: Percent of foreign participants who traveled to the United States for the first time during their program
  - E1.1.17: Percent of foreign participants with more favorable opinions of the American people
  - E1.1.18: Percent of foreign participants indicating an increase in understanding of United States culture and values

- E1.1.19: Percent of participants agreeing with statements in support of democratic values
- Objective 2: Increase the Impact that Participants and Alumni have on their Communities / Countries
  - Sub-Objective 2.2: Foster Participants' Belief that Civic Engagement Benefits Communities / Countries
    - E2.2.01: Percent of participants who have more confidence in their ability to have an impact in their home country
- Objective 3: Strengthen Engagement Among Participants, Alumni, Beneficiaries, and Institutions
  - E3.0.02: Percent of foreign participants who report increasing their network of Americans
  - E3.0.04: Percent of participants who report increasing their network of third country nationals
  - E3.0.07: Percent of participants who identify as a Department of State program participant
- Objective 4: Strengthen Personal, Professional, and Technical Abilities and Aptitudes of Participants and Beneficiaries
  - E4.0.01: Percent of participants reporting increases in their job skills as a result of their program participation
  - E4.0.03: Percent of participants reporting an increase in soft skills as a result of exchange program participation
  - E4.0.05: Percent of participants who report an increase in technical skills as a result of exchange program participation
  - Sub-Objective 4.1: Participants Engage in Language, Academic, Professional, and Cultural Exchange Program
    - E4.1.01: Total number of participants
    - E4.1.02: Total number of program cohorts
    - E4.1.04: Number of professional placements
    - E4.1.11: Number of American reciprocal exchange participants
    - E4.1.15: Number of participants in virtual exchange programs
- Objective 5: Increase the Contribution of Exchange Programs to Local Economies in the U.S., and Engagement of U.S. Businesses, Non-Government Organizations, and Educational Institutions in ECA Programming
  - Sub-Objective 5.1: Establish New Markets and Partnerships Among Participants, Sponsors, and Host Communities
    - E5.3.01: Amount of U.S. dollars spent by foreign program exchange participants during their exchange
- Objective 8: Enhance the Quality and Effectiveness of ECA Programs by Leveraging the Bureau's Resources, Policy, and Stakeholder Relationships
  - E8.0.01: Dollar amount (\$) spent on monitoring and evaluation activities of ECA awards by ECA award recipients
  - E8.0.03: Response rate for participant surveys

ECA recommends that applicants use the indicators listed in this section as the minimum requirement for measurement. Applicant-designed objectives and indicators that are specific to the proposed program and this proposal should be added as necessary to sufficiently measure the relevant proposed program outputs, outcomes, and impact over the course of the proposed period of performance

## **PMPs**

Please see below for a sample PMP and accompanying instructions. While ECA recommends the applicant use the format provided, this is not a requirement. However, all content present below should be included in any presentation of a PMP that the applicant submits. Successful PMPs should include the following:

- Programmatic objectives, which are statements of the condition(s) or state(s) the program is designed to achieve. Objectives are therefore bound by the resources and timeframe of the program and must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). In addition to those outlined above, the applicant may propose other program objectives from the Functional Bureau Strategy, MODE Results Framework (both found here: <https://eca.state.gov/about-bureau>) or other applicant-designed program-specific objectives. For more information on SMART see the ECA Evaluation Division's website: <https://eca.state.gov/impact/eca-evaluation-division/capacity-building>. ECA recommends the proposed PMPs include a minimum of one programmatic objective for each goal included in the PMP.
- Performance indicators are measures used to gauge progress toward programmatic objectives. Indicators should be as specific as possible (following the SMART principles) and include any proposed disaggregations.
  - In addition to those outlined above, the applicant may propose additional program-specific indicators in the PMP.
  - ECA recommends the proposed PMPs include a minimum of one indicator for each programmatic objective.
  - Baseline data (whether collected specifically for the program at the beginning of the award or from a previously existing source) for each indicator shall be included where relevant, as well as the target number to be achieved for each indicator.

The onus will be on the Bureau to measure outcomes of ECA participants at one-, three-, and five-years after their exchange has ended to capture the long-term impact of ECA programming. Award recipients are responsible for collecting indicator data on participant outcomes only during the period of performance of the exchange itself (see the PMP for guidelines as to when these data collection efforts should occur).

## **PROGRAM PERFORMANCE M&E NARRATIVE**

ECA recommends that there be a narrative section within the program narrative sections of the proposal that outlines how the applicant intends to measure the indicators outlined in the PMP. This will be separate from the PMP and should include but not be limited to:

- An overview of resources available to the applicant that outline the applicant's team structure and responsibilities surrounding performance monitoring.
- The mechanism(s) through which surveys and other data collection tools (if applicable) will be administered, including: which platform will be used, how they will be advertised to participants and when – detailing strategies to ensure adequate survey response rates and reduce selection and non-response bias.
- A brief explanation of data analysis and reporting procedures.
- An overview of proposed learning plan and feedback loops to ensure that the GO/GOR are informed on performance monitoring issues at regular intervals.

### **RESULTS PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The State Assistance Management System Domestic (SAMS-D) is a database solution that serves as the official system of record for all U.S. Department of State and ECA awards. The Results Performance Monitoring (RPM) module within SAMS-D is an extension module that enables users to report performance monitoring data in the same system where they currently manage federal assistance actions. As part of ECA's efforts to streamline data collection and management, any recipients of this award will be required to input performance reporting data outlined in this solicitation into the SAMS-D RPM. The data stored in the SAMS-D RPM will provide ECA with a bureau-wide, uniform M&E reporting tool that is already linked with other elements of the awards and that existing awardees are familiar with. There is a one-time 3-hour required SAMS-D RPM module training that designated staff of award recipient organizations will need to attend to gain access to the system. Also as part of the reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to provide ECA with the raw data for surveys in a CSV file through SAMS-D.

### **PERFORMANCE MONITORING PLAN**

<b>Applicant Name:</b>	Example Organization
<b>Fiscal Year and Program Title:</b>	FY## Example Program
<b>Funding Opportunity #:</b>	SFOP000XXXX

**Instructions:** A performance monitoring plan (PMP) describes the proposed indicators to be captured that demonstrate progress toward achieving the objectives of the program. The table below includes the recommended programmatic objectives and indicators as indicated in the solicitation document. Within this table, please provide any additional applicant-designed objectives and indicators that are specific to the proposed program that measure the relevant outputs, outcomes, and impact over the course of the award's proposed period of performance. (Note: the placement of two rows for applicant-designed indicators is arbitrary – the applicant can add or delete rows as necessary).

While ECA recommends the applicant use the format provided, this is not a requirement. However, all content present below should be included in any presentation of a PMP that the applicant submits. Successful PMPs should include the following:

**Completion:** All components of the PMP are included.

**Inclusion of ECA standard indicators:** Includes the standardized ECA indicators pre-populated in the PMP template and listed in the solicitation without any adapting of the definitions, data sources, collection timelines and responsible entities.

**Baselines and targets:** Baselines and targets are included and realistic. If there is no baseline to report, there should be a plan for how to obtain or produce the value in the future.

If the applicant chooses to include any *applicant-designed objectives* and indicators, successful applicants will include the following elements:

**SMART Objectives and Indicators:** Objectives and Indicators should follow SMART principles ([https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/a\\_good\\_start\\_with\\_smart.pdf](https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/a_good_start_with_smart.pdf)).

**Details of indicators:** All basic information of the indicators (definition, data source and question, collection timeline and responsible entity) should be included. The definitions of the standardized ECA indicators should be used as examples of what to include and the format.

**Depth of indicators:** Outcomes should be used where possible to demonstrate if a program is meeting its objectives. While outputs are important to understand if a program achieved what it was meant to do, outcomes demonstrate the larger effect of the program.

**Indicator Structure:** Ensures that the indicator does not measure multiple things (participants AND host families), does not start with a direction (“Increase” is a result, “Number of” is an indicator), and should reports numeric data (“good test results” is not an indicator)

**Redundancy:** There should be a clear and distinct reason for each indicator, and the indicator should not overlap with ECA standard indicators. Each indicator should be clearly linked to either an ECA standard objective or a custom objective.

**Consistency with ECA Indicators:** Key terms are defined the same way. Disaggregations align where appropriate, and calculations follow the same structure.

### **Definitions of PMP Columns**

**Performance Indicator:** An observable or measurable characteristic that indicates the extent to which a program objective is being achieved. Specify if the indicator is an ECA standard indicator or a custom indicator.

**Definition:** Clarifies all terms necessary, provides details on how to calculate the data collected to measure the change expected, and includes any disaggregation (male/female; country; region; age; etc.) that needs to be reported for the indicator.

**Baseline:** The value of an indicator before the implementation of a program

**Target:** Specific, planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe

**Data Source and Question:** Specifies how the data will be obtained (such as a survey, observation, interview, etc.) and the **mandatory** question linked to the data collection.

**When to Collect:** Specifies when the indicator will be measured, for example: post-program, end of award, etc.

- A post-program collection should occur no earlier than before the participant departs the United States and no later than 6 weeks after an activity has ended
- Award recipients are responsible for collecting indicator data on participant outputs and outcomes during the period of performance of the exchange itself. Any anticipated data collection that occurs post-program should include specific details of when the data collection will occur. Note: The onus will be on the Bureau to measure outcomes of ECA participants at one-, three-, and five-years after their exchange has ended to capture the long-term impact of ECA programming.

**Entity Responsible:** Person or entity responsible for collecting the data

Performance Indicator	Definition	Baseline	Target	Data Source and Question	When to Collect	Entity Responsible
<b>ECA Objective 1:</b> Advance Participant and Beneficiary Cross-Cultural Competence and Global Perspective						
<b>ECA Sub-Objective 1:</b> Promote cultural exchanges and enhance understanding between participants and their host communities						
E1.1.04 - Percent of participants with more favorable opinions of the United States Government	<u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private	0	To be completed by applicant	Survey (self-reported data)  Did your views of the United States government change as a result of your exchange program participation?	Post-Program	Award recipient



	<p>Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><b>Counting Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> To calculate percentage, numerator will be number of respondents who select "much more favorable" OR "somewhat more favorable" on the survey question. The denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p>If YES: How did your views of the United States government change? Are your views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much less favorable</li> <li>• Somewhat less favorable</li> <li>• Somewhat more favorable</li> <li>• Much more favorable</li> </ul>		
E1.1.09 - Percent of participants who traveled abroad for the first time because of their program	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><u>Abroad</u> - A country outside of one's home country.</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p>Before this exchange program, had you traveled outside of your home country? Yes No</p> <p>If YES:  Why did you travel outside of your home country? <i>Select all that apply.</i> Tourism</p>	Post-program	Award recipient

	<p><b>Counting Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> To calculate percentage, numerator will be number of respondents who answered “no” to the first question while the denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.</p>			<p>Visit friends/family Participation in another U.S. Department of State exchange program (including U.S. Embassy-sponsored exchanges) Participation in a non-U.S. Department of State exchange Study Work Other: _____ [write-in]</p>		
E1.1.10 - Percent of foreign participants who traveled to the United States for the first time during their program	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA’s Office of Private Sector Exchange’s (ECA/EC) “Exchange Visitors.”</p> <p><b>Counting Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once per reporting year following their program completion.</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)  Before this exchange program, had you traveled to the United States? Yes No</p> <p>If YES: Why did you travel to the United States? <i>Select all that apply.</i> Tourism Visit friends/family Participation in another U.S. Department of State exchange program (including U.S. embassy-sponsored exchange programs)</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient

	<p><b>Calculations</b> To determine the percent value, numerator is number of respondents who reply “no” to the first question while denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.</p>			<p>Participation in a non-U.S. Department of State exchange Study Work Other: _____ [write-in]</p>		
E1.1.17 - Percent of foreign participants with more favorable opinions of the American people	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA’s Office of Private Sector Exchange’s (ECA/EC) “Exchange Visitors.”</p> <p><b>Counting Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> To determine the percent value, numerator is number of respondents who reply “much more favorable” OR “somewhat more favorable” while</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p>Did your views of the American people change as a result of your exchange program participation? Yes No</p> <p>If YES:</p> <p>How did your views of the American people change? Are your views: Much less favorable Somewhat less favorable Somewhat more favorable Much more favorable</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient

	the denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.					
E1.1.18 - Percent of foreign participants indicating an increase in understanding of United States culture and values	<p><b>Participant</b> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><b>Counting Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> Responses to each item should be scored in the following manner: No change – 1 Minimal change – 2 Moderate change – 3 Substantial change – 4</p> <p>The response scores for each item should be summed and divided by the number of items they responded to in order to give a</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p>How much did participation in the exchange program change your understanding or knowledge of each of the following topics? United States democracy United States economy Foreign affairs of the United States Domestic affairs in the United States United States values and culture Daily life in the United States Religious and ethnic diversity in the United States Freedom of speech and press in the United States Voluntary community service in the United States</p> <p>[Scale: No change, Minimal change, Moderate change, Substantial change]</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient

	<p>total question score for each respondent.</p> <p>To determine the percent value, numerator is number of respondents whose total question score is 2 or greater while the denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.</p>					
E1.1.19 - Percent of participants agreeing with statements in support of democratic values	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><u>Democratic values</u> - The ideas or beliefs that make a society fair, including: democratic decision-making, freedom of speech, equality before the law, social justice, equality, social justice.</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below?</p> <p>Voting is important because real decisions are made in elections</p> <p>Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy</p> <p>An independent media is important to the free flow of information</p> <p>All citizens in a country should have equal rights and protections under the law, regardless of circumstances</p> <p>The rule of law is fundamental to a functioning democracy</p> <p>Individuals have the right to free speech and to voice opposition</p> <p>Organizations have the right to free</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient

	<p>program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> Responses to each item should be scored in the following manner: Strongly disagree – 1 Disagree – 2 Neither disagree nor agree – 3 Agree – 4 Strongly agree – 5 I don't know/I can't ascertain – 0</p> <p>To determine the percent value, numerator is the number of respondents whose average question score is greater than or equal to 4 on a 1-5 scale while the denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.</p>			<p>speech and to voice opposition Democratic principles enhance the workplace. Supervisors should incorporate democratic principles into their management practices</p> <p>[Scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither disagree nor agree, Agree, Strongly agree, I don't know/I can't ascertain]</p>		
<b>Objective 2:</b> Increase the Impact that Participants and Alumni have on their Communities / Countries						
<b>Sub-Objective 2.2:</b> Foster Participants' Belief that Civic Engagement Benefits Communities / Countries						
E2.2.01 - Percent of participants who have more confidence in their ability to have an impact in their home country	<p><b>Definitions</b> <u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC)</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p>As a result of your program participation, how has your confidence in each of the following changed?</p> <p>I have the ability to make a difference in</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient

<p>“Exchange Visitors.”</p> <p><u>Home community</u> - The community that the program participant originates from and will return to at the conclusion of the program.</p> <p><u>Home country</u> - The country in which the program participant resides.</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculation</b> To determine the percent value, numerator is number of respondents that responded “more confident” to the statement about their ability to make a difference in the ‘community where I live’ while the denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.</p>				<p>the <b>community</b> where I live</p> <p>I have the ability to make a difference in the <b>country</b> where I live</p> <p>I have the ability to make a difference in the <b>global community</b></p> <p>[Scale: I am less confident; No change in confidence, I am more confident]</p>				
<p><b>Objective 3:</b> Strengthen Engagement Among Participants, Alumni, Beneficiaries, and Institutions</p>								



<p>E3.0.02 - Percent of foreign participants who report increasing their network of Americans</p>	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><u>Network</u> - An interconnected or interrelated group or system. In the context of MODE, this refers to an interconnected or interrelated group intentionally convened, sustained, or otherwise facilitated through ECA programming.</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> To determine the percent value, numerator is number of respondents who reply "yes" to the first question item while the denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p>Are you still in contact with any Americans you met during your program exchange? Yes No</p> <p>If YES:</p> <p>Are the contacts you maintain with Americans personal, professional, or both? Personal Professional Both personal and professional</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient
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	denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.					
E3.0.04 – Percent of participants who report increasing their network of third country nationals	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person or group of persons that has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA’s Office of Private Sector Exchange’s (ECA/EC) “Exchange Visitors.”</p> <p><u>Network</u>- An interconnected or interrelated group or system intentionally convened, sustained, or otherwise facilitated through ECA programming.</p> <p><u>Third-country national</u> - A person who does not have the same nationality and is not from the country in which the exchange took place or from the country of a participant of the exchange.</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b></p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p>Are you still in contact with any individual not from the U.S. and not from your own country that you met during your program exchange? Yes No</p> <p>If YES:</p> <p>Are the contacts you maintain with these individuals personal, professional, or both? Personal Professional Both personal and professional</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient

	To determine the percent value, numerator is number of respondents who reply “yes” to the first question item while the denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.					
E3.0.07 - Percent of participants who identify as a Department of State program participant	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person or group of persons that has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA’s Office of Private Sector Exchange’s (ECA/EC) “Exchange Visitors.”</p> <p><u>Alumni</u> - Program participants who have been exposed to at least 36 hours of an exchange or a cultural exchange element with the possibility of sustained networking.</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p>Do you consider yourself a participant of a U.S. Department of State program? Yes No</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient

	<b>Calculations</b> To calculate percentage, numerator will be number of participants who answered “yes” in response to the survey question. The denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.					
<b>Objective 4: Strengthen Personal, Professional, and Technical Abilities and Aptitudes of Participants and Beneficiaries</b>						
E4.0.01 - Percent of participants reporting increases in their job skills as a result of their program participation	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA’s Office of Private Sector Exchange’s (ECA/EC) “Exchange Visitors.”</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> To determine the percent value, numerator is number of respondents who reply “yes” while the denominator will be the total</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	Survey (self-reported data)  <i>NOTE: This question is also included in Indicator 4.0.03 and 4.0.05. If at least one of those questions are also to be included in a survey, this question can be asked once, with follow-up question(s) based on an affirmative response.</i>  Did you increase your personal and/or professional skills as a result of your participation in this program? Yes No	Post-Program	Award recipient

	number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.					
E4.0.03 - Percent of participants reporting an increase in soft skills as a result of exchange program participation	<p><u>Soft skills</u> - Qualities and behaviors an individual demonstrates to interact with others effectively. Examples include communication, listening, self-awareness, awareness of others, self-initiative, cognitive competence skills, self-confidence, resourcefulness/resilience, and decision-making and problem-solving skills.</p> <p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each participant should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p><i>NOTE: Question 1 is also included in Indicator 4.0.01 and 4.0.05. If at least two of those questions are to be included in a survey, question 1 can be asked once, with two multiple follow-up questions based on an affirmative response.</i></p> <p>Did you increase your personal and/or professional skills as a result of your participation in this program? Yes No</p> <p>If YES:</p> <p>Please select the personal skills you increased. <i>Select all that apply.</i>          Leadership skills          Communication skills          Listening skills          Self-awareness          Self-initiative          Self-confidence          Resourcefulness          Decision-making skills          Problem-solving skills          Other: _____          [write-in]</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient

	<b>Calculations</b> To determine the percent value, numerator is number of respondents who select at least one answer option except for “none of the above skills” in the second question while the denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.			None of the above skills		
E4.0.05 - Percent of participants who report an increase in technical skills as a result of exchange program participation	<b>Technical skills</b> - Knowledge and ability to perform specific tasks. Examples of technical skills include project management, project management, entrepreneurship, journalism, teaching instruction, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) competence.  <u>Participant</u> - a person or group of persons that has directly participated in, and benefits from, an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA’s Office of Private	0	To be completed by applicant	Survey (self-reported data)  <i>NOTE: Question 1 is also included in Indicator 4.0.01 and 4.0.03. If at least two of these questions are to be included in a survey, question 1 can be asked once, with two multiple follow-up questions based on an affirmative response.</i>  Did you increase your personal and/or professional skills as a result of your participation in this program? Yes No  If YES:  Please select the skills you increased. <i>Select all that apply.</i>	Post-Program	Award recipient

	<p>Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> To determine the percent value, numerator is number of respondents who select at least one answer option EXCEPT for "none of the above skills" in the second question while the denominator will be the total number of survey respondents. Divide the numerator by the denominator and then multiply by 100 for the percent value.</p>			<p>Project management skills Business management skills Entrepreneurship skills Journalism skills Teaching skills Science competence Technology competence Engineering competence Mathematics competence Other: _____ [write-in] None of the above skills</p>		
<b>Sub-Objective 4.1:</b> Participants Engage in Language, Academic, Professional, and Cultural Exchange Program						
E4.1.01 - Total number of participants	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	Administrative data from award recipients	Annually	Award recipient



	<b>Counting Frequency</b> Each participant should only be counted once per semi-annual reporting cycle following their program completion.					
E4.1.02 - Total number of program cohorts	<p><u>Program cohort</u> - A group of participants hosted separately under a program umbrella and following a set course of activities and/or study. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IVLP is a program – each individual IVLP project conducted in a year would be considered a sperate cohort.</li> <li>• PFP is a program – the two groups of participant s PFP brings to the US each year are each considered separate cohorts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Counting Frequency</b> Each cohort should only be counted once per semi-</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	Administrative data from award recipients	Annually	Award recipient

	annual reporting cycle following its completion.					
E4.1.04 - Number of professional placements	<p><u>Professional placement</u> - A position placement a participant holds during their exchange program with a host institution for the purpose of professional development. These are most commonly internships, but can also include job shadowing, mentoring or a professional project as well., etc.</p> <p><u>Host institution</u> - An institution that sponsors, supports, or provides exchange programs support or services. Host institutions do not necessarily directly participate in a program. Benefits to this group most often occur through interaction with the participants and/or alumni during or after the program.</p> <p><u>Professional development</u> - The act of learning and/or improving skills in order to better meet professional goals. Professional development activities can include formal coursework,</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	Administrative data from award recipients	Annually	Award recipient

	<p>attending conferences, and informal learning opportunities situated in practice; i.e. informal peer-to-peer interaction and learning, or opportunities through knowledge sharing.</p> <p><b>Counting Frequency</b></p> <p>Each placement should only be counted once the placement has been completed and only once per semi-annual reporting cycle. If a participant holds more than one placement during their exchange program, each placement should be counted.</p>					
E4.1.11 - Number of American reciprocal exchange participants	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><u>Reciprocal Exchange Participant</u> - An American who travels to an exchange participant's home country to assist the</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	Administrative data from award recipients	Annually	Award recipient

	<p>participant with their individual project.</p> <p><b>Counting Frequency</b> Each participant should only be counted once per semi-annual reporting cycle following their program completion</p>					
E4.1.15 - Number of participants in virtual exchange programs	<p><u>Participant</u> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><u>Virtual Exchange</u> - A sustained, multi-way interaction, <i>that are online</i>, used to build networks and shared knowledge around policy priorities. For a program to be considered a virtual exchange, participants must engage 51% or more virtually. A series of virtual components can be considered an exchange if they are (1) originated as a unit with a collective start and end date and (2) are organized around a</p>	0	To be completed by applicant	Administrative data from award recipients	Annually	Award recipient

	<p>unifying theme. For example: a series of MOOCs would be considered an exchange if they are offered as a set (of say six classes) and are centered on a specific topic (for example, media literacy). Offering MOOCs as an online resource is not considered a virtual exchange program.</p> <p>This indicator counts participants involved in virtual exchange programs (see definition above) and WILL NOT count participants engaging with virtual program elements.</p> <p><u>Virtual elements</u> - Expand the reach of programs and increase engagement for participants and alumni. Unlike virtual programs, virtual elements are single, stand-alone components, offered either as add-on enrichment to an in-person exchange or as general outreach by ECA. For example, offering single MOOCs to the general public or virtual pre-departure orientation</p>					
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	<p>webinars are both considered virtual elements. Additionally, online spaces for participants to communicate (such as a program Facebook page) is considered a virtual element.</p> <p><b>Counting Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year following their program completion.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b>  This indicator counts participants involved in virtual exchange programs (see definition above) and WILL NOT count participants engaging with virtual program elements. Each participant should only be counted once per semi-annual reporting cycle following their program completion</p>					
<b>Objective 5:</b> Increase the Contribution of Exchange Programs to Local Economies in the U.S., and Engagement of U.S. Businesses, Non-Government Organizations, and Educational Institutions in ECA Programming						
<b>Sub-Objective 5.1:</b> Establish New Markets and Partnerships Among Participants, Sponsors, and Host Communities						
E5.3.01 - Amount of U.S. dollars spent by foreign	<p><b>Definitions</b> <u>Participant</u> – A person who has directly participated in an ECA</p>	N/A	N/A	<p>Survey (self-reported data)</p> <p>Approximately how much money did you</p>	Post-Program	Award recipient

program exchange participants during their exchange	<p>exchange program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each respondent should only be counted once in the reporting year.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> Participants will complete a survey question that will request participants to report a whole dollar amount in U.S. dollars spent on food, travel, leisure, and merchandise during the program.</p> <p>This indicator also requests disaggregation based on a participant's placement state. This only applies if an exchange participant was based in one state for more than one month; for example, for IVLP participants, the placement state would not need to be reported.</p>			spend on food, travel, leisure, and/or merchandise while in the United States for your exchange program? This should include any stipend money that you spent. Please estimate to the nearest dollar and use numbers only (no symbols).		
<b>Objective 8:</b> Enhance the Quality and Effectiveness of ECA Programs by Leveraging the Bureau's Resources, Policy, and Stakeholder Relationships						
E8.0.01 - Dollar amount (\$)	<u>Award recipient</u> - An entity that undertakes the	N/A	N/A	Administrative records	Annual ly	Award Recipient



<p>spent on monitoring and evaluation activities of ECA awards by ECA award recipients</p>	<p>work of the ECA Bureau programs, using ECA funding under a formal legal agreement. For ECA Exchange Visitor Programs, these entities are called Exchange Sponsors, which are not ECA-funded, and consist of public, private, or nonprofit entities designated by the Department of State to support persons involved in exchange program activities or events.</p> <p><b>Count Frequency</b> Each award recipient should only be counted once per reporting period, even if they have implemented multiple programs.</p> <p><b>Calculation</b></p> <p>This figure can include fees to any sub-contractors conducting M&amp;E on behalf of the ECA program. This can also include the salaries of award recipient and ECA personnel, but only for the time they spend on M&amp;E of ECA awards. For salaries, can estimate the number of hours spent on M&amp;E activities for the reporting period</p>			<p>What is the total dollar amount for your organization's expenses related to monitoring and evaluation of ECA awards (for programmatic, non-financial reasons) for this reporting period? Please estimate to the nearest dollar.</p> <p>Fill in the blank:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>[validated as numeric]</p> <p><i>The following activities constitute monitoring and evaluation:</i></p> <p><i>Reviewing program outputs and any outcomes</i></p> <p><i>Reviewing web-based analytics</i></p> <p><i>Data collection with sub-grantees</i></p> <p><i>Program conceptualization through</i></p> <p><i>review/reflection</i></p> <p><i>Developing theory of change and/or logic models</i></p> <p><i>Working with the ECA MELI Unit</i></p> <p><i>Event observation</i></p> <p><i>Data collection with/from program participants</i></p> <p><i>Site visits to host institutions</i></p> <p><i>Performance (not grants/compliance) monitoring trips</i></p> <p><i>Creating or reviewing evaluation data collection tools for ECA programs</i></p> <p><i>Attending capacity-building workshops, presentations, or</i></p>		
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	and multiply by the salary figures.			<i>trainings on M&amp;E by the ECA MELI Unit Research activities intended to inform ECA program design</i>		
E8.0.03 - Response rate for participant surveys	<p><b>Participant</b> - A person who has directly participated in an ECA program. Note that participants also include ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange's (ECA/EC) "Exchange Visitors."</p> <p><b>Counting Frequency</b> Response rates will be calculated and reported semi-annually on surveys that <u>closed</u> (i.e. ceased allowing respondents to respond) in that six-month period, even if the survey opened in the previous six-month period. This may be a single survey or an aggregation, if more than one survey closed in that six-month period. Each survey invitation should be counted once, and each response (if received) should be counted once.</p> <p><b>Calculations</b> The response rate will be calculated by dividing the number of survey responses received</p>	N/A	N/A	Survey records	Semi-annually	Award Recipient

	<p>by the number of survey invitations issued (sent by email or directly invited in some other way).</p> <p>Note that “survey responses” will include cases in which any portion of a survey was returned (at least one piece of response data provided). It will not include cases where respondents opened the survey and opted out by selecting the option not to continue on the opening consent screen</p>					
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**Program Goal:** To empower entrepreneurs and innovative civil society leaders to strengthen capacity and advance their entrepreneurial ideas to contribute to social and economic development in their communities and region, including Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada.

**D.11. Virtual Exchange Component:** When changing political, health, environmental, or other similar circumstances require a suspension or halt of in-person activities, and where ECA determines that a virtual alternative is appropriate and viable, award recipients should demonstrate the ability and capacity to transition from in-person to virtual exchanges.

Proposals should demonstrate the organization’s capacity to provide innovative options for virtual activities to substitute for in-person engagement for program participants. Organizations should consider how they will implement virtual exchange activities, given the potential limits to internet access from participants in some locations and while continuing to advance foreign policy objectives and achieve lasting benefits for U.S. citizens and international participants.

In addition to planning for virtual exchange activities if in-person programming is prohibited, ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage virtual programming technologies during or in addition to in-person programming. ECA encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s) is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project-by-project basis.

**D.12. Communications Guidance for ECA Recipients:** All ECA Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA's Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

**D. 13. Celebration of America's Semiquincentennial:** ECA is excited to play a key role in making the Semiquincentennial – commonly known as “America250” – a truly global celebration. As the period of performance for this award is scheduled to cover part or all of calendar year (CY) 2026, the applicant may wish to consider ways the program can celebrate America250. Any America250 focused activities or plans will be subject to ECA approval and direction, and changes may be requested by ECA. Use of any ECA-provided America250 brand elements will be subject to advance ECA approval and require adherence to Department of State and ECA guidelines for such branding.

**D.14. Budget Format:** Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget, a detailed budget, and a budget narrative. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

**D.15. Allowable costs for the program include the following:**

Travel: International and domestic airfare; airline baggage and seat fees; visas for U.S. travelers; transit costs; ground transportation costs. Please note that all air travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act. There is no charge for J-1 visas for foreign participants in Bureau-sponsored projects.

Per Diem: For U.S.-based programming, organizations should use the published Federal per diem rates for individual U.S. cities. Domestic per diem rates may be accessed at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. ECA requests applicants to budget realistic costs that reflect the local economy and do not exceed Federal per diem rates. Foreign per diem rates can be accessed at: [https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp)

Book and Cultural Allowances: Participants are entitled to a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a book allowance of \$50. Interpreters should be reimbursed up to \$150 for expenses when they escort participants to cultural events. U.S. project staff, trainers or participants are not eligible to receive these benefits.

Consultants: Consultants may be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Honoraria rates should not exceed \$250 per day per session. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share rates that would exceed that figure. Sub-award recipient organizations may also be employed, in which case the written agreement between the prospective award recipient and sub-award recipient should be included in the proposal. Such sub-awards should detail the division of responsibilities and proposed costs, and subcontracts should be itemized in the budget. Contractors/contracting organizations may also be employed in which case the written agreement between the award recipient and the contractors/contracting organizations should be included in the proposal.

Overhead Costs: Costs necessary for the effective administration of the project may include salaries for employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the PSI. Proposals should show strong cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner and other sources. Travel of primary award recipient staff or sub-award recipient staff should NOT be included in the exchange participant numbers.

Reasonable Accommodations: Organizations should budget for the reasonable accommodations of participating individuals with disabilities. Proposals may allocate up to 5 - 7% of the total requested ECA award funds for this purpose.

Pre-departure Orientation: Travel to the Pre-departure location(s); ground transportation to and from the airport to the orientation(s) site; food and lodging for all Fellows, adequate meeting space; travel from orientation to fellowship sites.

Arrival Orientation: International travel to the U.S.-based orientation location; ground transportation to and from the airport to the orientation site; food and lodging for Fellows, adequate conference meeting space for participants (Fellows, grantee staff, speakers, facilitators, DOS staff, other invited guests); travel from orientation to fellowship sites.

Fellowships: Lodging, per diem, transportation, and other necessary program-related expenses the Fellows may incur while at their fellowship sites.

Entrepreneurial training sessions: Training materials, trainers, meeting space/equipment rental, etc.

YLAI Closing Forum: Travel to Washington, D.C; ground transportation to and from the airport to the conference hotel; food and lodging for Fellows for a three to four-day conference, adequate conference space for approximately 350 participants (Fellows, grantee staff, speakers, facilitators, DOS staff, other invited guests); international travel from forum to home country.

U.S. Participant follow-on travel: Travel, ground transportation, lodging, per diem, for approximately 70 U.S. participants for 10 to 15 days in relevant Western Hemisphere countries.

Room Rental: The rental of meeting space should not exceed \$250 per day per activity. Any rates that exceed this amount should be cost shared.

Materials: Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop, and translate materials. Costs for high quality translation of materials should be anticipated and included in the budget.

Supplies: Applicants may propose to use award funds to purchase supplies, such as computers and printers; supply costs should be justified in the budget narrative. Costs for furniture are not allowed.

Working Meal: One working meal may be provided during each U.S.-based and foreign-based component. Per capita costs for working meals may not exceed \$45/person, excluding room rental and other overhead charges. The number of invited guests may not exceed Fellows by more than a factor of two-to-one.

Return Travel Allowance: A return travel allowance of \$70 for each Fellow may be included in the budget. This allowance would cover incidental expenses incurred during international travel.

Health and Travel Insurance: The award recipient will be responsible for working with ECA to ensure that both foreign Fellows and American participants traveling on overseas for outbound projects are enrolled in the ECA-sponsored Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). The premium is paid by ECA and should not be included in the proposal budget. Applicants may include costs for travel insurance for both Fellows and U.S. Participants in the budget.

Wire Transfer Fees: When necessary, applicants may include costs to transfer funds to foreign-based partner organizations. The primary award recipient is urged to research applicable taxes that may be imposed on these transfers by host governments.

In-Country Travel Costs for Visa Processing Purposes: U.S. visas for Fellows are provided by DOS and should not be included in the budget. Given the requirements associated with obtaining J-1 visas for ECA-supported participants, applicants should include costs for any travel associated with procuring visas, including travel for interviews, delivering or picking up passports, etc.

Alumni Activities: Reasonable costs related to alumni activities may be included. The proposal must include an outline of any proposed follow-on activities. Proposals should also demonstrate how the recipient organization will creatively use technology and online networking sites to enhance and amplify alumni programming. Organizations can propose small grants or a small grant competition for the Fellows to compete for to encourage their continued work on and implementation of their individual Action Plans.

Pandemic-related expenses: Pandemic-related expenses, if any, that are deemed necessary for implementing the two-way exchange program should be described in detail in order to receive consideration.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

**D.16. Key Personnel:** ECA recommends that the applicant identify intended key personnel positions via an asterisk (\*) or other marking in the proposal budget, budget narrative, or a separate appendix. If not provided in the application, recipients must submit the names, titles, and brief biographical sketches of key personnel to the Grants Officer and GOR within 30 days of an award being issued. Additional information regarding key personnel requirements can be found in the State Department's Standard Terms and Conditions, VI. Recipient Responsibility and Compliance with Federal Requirements (link to: <https://www.state.gov/about-us-office-of-the-procurement-executive/>).

**D.17. Non-Competitive Continuations:** Pending successful performance and the availability of funds this award will utilize Non-Competitive Continuations as discussed above.

**D.17.a. For competitions that will exercise a Non-Competitive Continuation applicants must submit:**

- The SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program.
- A detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instruction Document (PSI) for general budget guidance.). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuation years, pending successful program performance and the availability of funds.
- An abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two non-competitive continuation years).

**D.17.b. To exercise the Non-Competitive Continuation mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:**

- Performance and financial reports on time.
- A request in writing to ECA at least 30 days in receipt of the NCC invitation.
- A summary budget that projects expenses through the end of the current year.



- A detailed budget outlining expenses for the requested non-competitive continuation year.
- A brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

**D.17.c. For awards using Non-Competitive Continuations, in addition to the Substantial Involvement for the Cooperative Agreement, the ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:**

1. Closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional non-competitive continuations. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)
2. Review and evaluate all program and financial reports;
  - All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional non-competitive continuations.
  - Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
  - The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent non-competitive continuations.
3. Prior Grants Officer approval is required to utilize the remainder from an unobligated balance from a prior funding period to the subsequent funding period. If the Grants Officer determines that some or all of the unobligated funds are not necessary to perform the program activity, the Grants Officer may decline the Recipient's request to utilize the remainder from the unobligated balance.

The Grants Officer may, at their discretion, use the unobligated balance to reduce or offset future funding for a subsequent funding period. An unobligated balance at the end of a funding period is not sufficient justification to utilize the remainder of funds. A final determination and approval to utilize the remainder of any funds will be communicated via a cost amendment with adjustment, if any, to new obligation amounts.

The request to utilize the remainder from an unobligated balance must include:

- A brief narrative why funds remain unobligated and how the unobligated funds will be used to complete the previously approved goals and objectives of the program; and,

- A detailed budget that reflects the amount of unobligated funds to date and anticipated expenditures in the subsequent period of performance for all cost categories under the authorized budget.

#### **D.18. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:**

Application Deadline Date: Friday, March 25, 2022

Method of Submission: Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the “Search Grants” portion of the system.

#### **D.19. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures**

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the ‘Get Started’ portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

##### **D.19.a. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov**

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

##### **D.19.b. How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov**

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

##### **D.19.c. Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues**

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

##### **D.19.d. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission**

Applicants have until 11:59 p.m., Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after the application deadline date and time will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

**Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.**

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

**PLEASE NOTE:** ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov. Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

**It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.**

**D.20. Intergovernmental Review of Applications:** Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

## **E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the U.S. Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

### **Review Criteria**

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

**1. Quality of Program Plan and Ability to Achieve Objectives:** The proposal should exhibit originality and clearly demonstrate how the applicant will meet the objectives laid out in this solicitation. A detailed agenda and staff work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Activities should be reasonable, feasible, and form a coherent program. Competitive proposals will clearly promote ECA's mission: to foster mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries to promote friendly and peaceful relations.

**2. Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on Diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how DEI will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of design, content and implementation, including individual participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated DEI plan and not simply express general support for the concept of DEI. Proposals should demonstrate how DEI will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Proposals should demonstrate how the program will further engage diverse and underserved communities.

**3. Project Monitoring and Evaluation:** Proposals should include a fully developed Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) narrative and a PMP that includes the goals, objectives, and indicators outlined in the M&E section, as well as any applicant-designed, program-specific objectives and indicators that sufficiently measure the relevant program outputs and outcomes during the period of performance. Proposals will be evaluated for feasibility and alignment with the M&E section, including: 1) M&E resources, monitoring mechanisms, and data analysis and reporting procedures being sufficiently detailed and realistic; 2) a realistic learning plan that provides a strategy to review, understand, and incorporate M&E data into programmatic decisions and practices in conjunction with the Grants Officer/GOR; and 3) a

PMP that is complete, clear, and well-organized. All submitted PMPs and M&E narrative sections will be reviewed to ensure the applicant has provided information on the minimum data required as per the solicitation.

**4. Cost-effectiveness and Cost Sharing:** The overhead components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All costs should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

**5. Institutional Capacity and Record:** Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be fully qualified to achieve the project's goals. Proposals should include detailed information about proposed partners, including a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities and descriptions and resumes of key staff who will implement the program.

**6. Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should discuss provisions made for follow-up with returned participants as a means of establishing longer-term individual and institutional linkages. Proposals should also provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without ECA support) ensuring that ECA supported programs are not isolated events.

## **F. Federal Award Administration Information**

**F.1. Award Notices:** Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer as identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition following the completion of the review process.

**F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:** Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov) website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>  
<https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm>

**F.3. Reporting Requirements:** You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

- 1.) Performance Progress Reports (PPRs) shall be required at a minimum annually and no more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports shall be due 120 calendar days after the cooperative agreement; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's [SAMS Domestic](#).
- 2.) The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [SAMS Domestic](#), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email [ECA\\_SAMSDomestic@state.gov](mailto:ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov).

- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 120 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) Because the Competition will allow for the exercise of Non-Competitive Continuations (NCC), applicants must submit program and financial reports on time. The due dates for these reports will be included in the cooperative agreement. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their M&E findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

**F.4. Program Data Requirements:** Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work-days prior to the official opening of the activity.

## **G. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Rachel M. O'Hara, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Global Leaders Division, SA-5, Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202 262 5835, [ohararm@state.gov](mailto:ohararm@state.gov).

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

**H. Other Information:****Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards will be subject to periodic programmatic and financial reporting and M&E requirements as outlined in the NOFO.

Lee Satterfield  
Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
U.S. Department of State